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Fellow Taxpayers:

Please know that I cut costs and saved valuable tax dollars on this important mailing to you by reducing its size and posting additional info on my Web site.

C.L.

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SEN. LAWSON: BILLS I SUPPORTED THIS SESSION

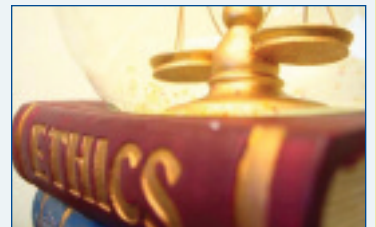
✓ **Child Support:** In an effort to collect more than \$2 billion in overdue child support payments, lawmakers passed a bill to withhold casino winnings from those who ignore their court-ordered obligations. The Indiana Department of Child Services estimates more than 165,000 "deadbeat parents" each owe more than \$2,000 in support payments. Colorado passed a similar law in July 2008, resulting in more than \$320 million in delinquent payments.

✓ **Voting Accessibility:** House Enrolled Act 1109 makes voting easier for those with disabilities and military personnel serving our country overseas. The new



law ensures disabled voters have the same access to private, independent voting methods when casting ballots early or absentee as they do when voting on Election Day. It also provides online and fax options for military personnel to cast a vote when serving overseas.

✓ **Government Ethics:** Legislators passed comprehensive ethics reform legislation, creating a one-year cooling-off period before a retired legislator could become a lobbyist and requiring uniform reporting by all lobbyists. The threshold for reported one-time lobbyist expenses drops from \$100 to \$50, with the annual total dropping from \$500 to \$250. Registration and reporting requirements now include legislative liaisons of state agencies and universities.



✓ **Unemployment Insurance:** Lawmakers helped protect Hoosier jobs by passing Senate Enrolled Act 23 to delay a scheduled increase in unemployment insurance premiums paid by employers. The delay will save Indiana employers an estimated \$400 million this year, relieving them of an additional financial burden in a tough economy while helping them create jobs and avoid layoffs.



SEN. CONNIE LAWSON

SERVING SENATE DISTRICT 24 TAXPAYERS



LAWMAKERS GIVE SCHOOLS FUNDING FLEXIBILITY, MORE LOCAL CONTROL

Lawmakers this session provided schools more financial flexibility and local control. We also took steps to address social promotion of students not reading at grade level.

Giving local school corporations greater ability to address funding challenges and meet the educational needs of Hoosier students are key goals of House Enrolled Act 1367.

Under this new law, schools can transfer up to 5 percent of funding normally dedicated to capital projects and use it for instructional purposes. Schools agreeing to pay freezes for staff, with exceptions for built-in raises based on experience and new degrees, can use up to 10 percent.

This measure will provide access to nearly \$82 million statewide to help prevent teacher layoffs and

preserve instructional programs. By allowing them to tap into these funds, HEA 1367 helps schools address budget cuts and avoid new taxes on Hoosiers.

This legislation also requires schools to develop a plan to protect instructional programs, including provisions for students who are deficient in reading. Input will be sought through public hearings.



To avoid additional costs and provide more local control, Senate Enrolled Act 309 gives schools the option to continue budgeting on a January 1 – December 31 calendar or change to the state's fiscal July 1 – June 30 calendar. Without this new flexibility, many schools would have

to pay for more training and equipment during already difficult financial times.

PROPERTY TAX CAPS

Hoosier voters in November's general election will determine if permanent caps on property tax rates will be added to Indiana's Constitution.

Lawmakers this session gave final approval to a resolution that would constitutionally cap property tax rates at 1 percent for owner-occupied homes, 2 percent for other residential and agricultural properties and 3 percent for businesses.

This action sets the stage to make these 1-2-3 caps part of the constitution.

In the immediate aftermath of the 2007 property tax crisis, both chambers passed the property tax caps amendment in 2008.

Thanks to the 2010 approval, the amendment has now been passed by two separately-elected sessions of the General Assembly and can go before voters on Nov. 2.

This year's action by both the Senate and House proves lawmakers are once again siding with taxpayers and not tax spenders – keeping the promise of permanent property tax relief and reform.

AG ASSESSMENTS

Lawmakers approved a measure aimed at stabilizing Indiana's agricultural property assessment system that farmers say is currently unfair.

State figures show farmers are experiencing unanticipated "peaks and valleys" in farmland assessments based on an experimental formula crafted in 2006. Economists attribute the fluctuations in part to speculation about alternative energy sources like ethanol, bio-diesel, bio-mass and wind as well as economic corrections due to the national

recession, food and energy markets.

Senate Enrolled Act 396, supported by the Indiana Farm Bureau, will use an adjusted rolling average that eliminates the highest assessed value over a six-year period.

Known by economists as the "Modified Olympic Average" technique, the model should provide farmers and local governments more stable agricultural property assessments and be more representative of true market value.